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Article

Language Use and Social Inclusion in International Retirement Migration

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Abstract

The migration of older people in search for improved quality of life has become an important form of human mobility, and popular retirement destinations are often highly multilingual settings. This article explores language use and social inclusion in international retirement migration through a case study of Scandinavian retirees in the Alicante province in Spain. It examines the linguistic landscape they meet, their language use and their inclusion in their new home country. Interviews with retired migrants and key local individuals show that many migrants try to learn the host country language, but that these attempts are often not very successful. As a result, they frequently use either their native language or English for everyday communication. This article elaborates on three theoretical and political notions of inclusion—assimilation, multiculturalism and civic integration—and discusses how retired migrants' language use can be interpreted in the light of these notions.

Keywords

international retirement migration; language; multilingualism; social inclusion; Spain

Issue

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1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, international retirement migration has emerged as a significant form of migration, as growing numbers of retirees from the Western world have moved in search of improved quality of life (King, Warnes, & Williams, 2000; Migration Policy Institute, 2006). International retirement migration has an important linguistic dimension, as retirees often move to destinations where their native language is not the official or commonly spoken language. This creates a multilingual situation that requires linguistic adaptation—by the retirees, by local authorities, or by other actors in the host society. This, in turn, raises questions about social, cultural and linguistic inclusion.

This article draws on a case study of Scandinavian retirement migration to the Spanish province of Alicante.

It puts the analytical focus on the local multilingual setting and its implications for social inclusion. The article addresses the following questions: What are the main characteristics of the linguistic landscape that has developed in coastal Alicante as a consequence of extensive tourism-led retirement migration? How do retired migrants navigate this landscape and how do their linguistic practices affect their inclusion in their new home countries? More generally, how can we understand ‘inclusion’ in this specific context?

In the following sections, we briefly present the phenomenon of international retirement migration and the theoretical setting for the study. We then present our data and methods and describe the study's context. Subsequent analytical sections examine language use among Scandinavian retirees and local institutions in Alicante and different aspects of inclusion. A concluding sec-

tion discusses the conditions for social inclusion in the context of retirement migration and the role of language.

2. International Retirement Migration

Retirees may migrate for a range of different reasons. For example, retired labour migrants may return to their former home countries and parents may migrate in order to be close to their children (King, Lulle, Sampaio, & Vullnetari, 2017). However, this study, as is common in social science research, uses the term *international retirement migration* to refer to retirees from the Western world who move, permanently or temporarily, to a new country in search of a better quality of life (Herzog, 2016; Migration Policy Institute, 2006).

International retirement migration represents an important demographic and sociological phenomenon in a growing number of places across the globe. For decades, North American retirees have been moving to retirement communities in Mexico and the Caribbean (Migration Policy Institute, 2006) and North Europeans have moved to destinations along the Mediterranean (King et al., 2017). More recently, retirement migration has spread to other countries in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia, even though some of these newer migration flows have not yet been documented by scholarly research (e.g., Balkir & Kirkulak, 2009; Hayes, 2014; Wong & Musa, 2014).

In terms of migration motives, international retirement migration is a prominent form of 'lifestyle migration', according to the conceptualization of Benson and O'Reilly: 'relatively affluent individuals, moving either part-time or full-time, permanently or temporarily, to places which, for various reasons, signify for the migrants something loosely defined as quality of life' (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009, p. 621). A common reason for migration is the desire to live in a warm and pleasant climate that permits outdoor activities throughout the year. This is often associated with improved health, with numerous migrants primarily moving because of health problems. Natural or cultural values, a slower pace of life and vivid social environments often also play a role, together with economic factors (Casado-Díaz, Kaiser, & Warnes, 2004; King et al., 2000).

The socio-demographic background of retired migrants is diverse and varies between different destinations. Yet the general picture is that international retirement migration constitutes a relatively privileged form of migration, where individuals with high incomes and above-average education are overrepresented (Herzog, 2016; Casado-Díaz et al., 2004). Moreover, retirement migration is, by definition, pursued by people who are no longer dependent on labour incomes, but receive all or most of their incomes from pensions and savings. Hence, international retirement migration differs in several respects from those forms of migration—labour, refugee and family migration—which more frequently tend to be the subject of scientific research and political debate.

3. Social Inclusion

In current discussions on migration, immigrant inclusion and citizenship, social scientists have identified several different political conceptions of integration. A common distinction is between 'ethnos' and 'demos' (Borevi, 2010).

The ethnic notion ('ethnos') often implies an *assimilationist* approach to integration. In order to be included, immigrants are expected to assimilate into the culture of the host society and give up any linguistic, cultural or social characteristics that distinguish them from the majority population (Castles & Miller, 1998; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005). An ethnic conception of citizenship may also lead to 'differentialist exclusionist' policies (Castles & Miller, 1998) or ethnic segregation (Borevi, 2010), with immigrants being denied important citizenship rights. The latter, however, is the very opposite of inclusion.

The civic-territorial notion ('demos'), suggests that integration should be based on equal rights and duties for immigrants and native citizens. Two quite different variants of this position have emerged (Borevi, 2010). The *multicultural* notion of integration suggests that host societies should acknowledge cultural diversity and, when appropriate, take specific measures to support minority cultures and to grant equal rights to minority groups (Castles & Miller, 1998; Kymlicka, 1995). The notion of *civic integration*, on the other hand, disregards ethnicity and cultural differences and understands integration only in terms of equal civic rights and obligations (Borevi, 2010; Koopmans et al., 2005). In recent years, proponents of civic integration have increasingly emphasised duties and obligations rather than rights and suggested language tests, mandatory civic orientations courses and 'integration contracts' for immigrants (Goodman, 2012). In the present paper, however, we use the concept of civic integration in its traditional and more neutral version.

4. Migration and Language Use

There are two important normative perspectives on migration and linguistic diversity. On the one hand, language issues are prominent in discussions on *immigrant integration*. It is often considered crucial that immigrants learn the host country language in order to gain access to the labour market, to be able to participate in political processes, as well as for cultural or symbolic reasons related to belonging and identity (Schäffner, 2009; Torkington, 2015). From this perspective, the preferred outcome is individual-level multilingualism—that immigrants learn the host country language in addition to their native language. A potential problem with this approach is that excessive demands for cultural (including linguistic) assimilation may, in reality, exclude immigrants.

On the other hand, there are policies of *language rights* for minority groups, which sometimes also apply to migrants (e.g., European Union, 2010). Such rights

imply that legal residents with another native language than the majority or official language should have the opportunity, at least under certain circumstances, to communicate in their native language. From this perspective, the preferred outcome is rather a societal-level multilingualism—that the host society provides information not only in the majority language, but also in relevant minority languages, and that interpretation or translation is available in certain situations. Whether such strategies promote or hinder social inclusion is subject to debate (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; Schäffner, 2009). Several theorists argue that language rights should primarily apply to ‘native’ minorities and not (or only to a limited extent) to immigrant groups, as they fear that generous language rights may discourage immigrants from learning the host country’s language (Alcalde, 2015).

5. Data and Methods

The case under study is Scandinavian retirement migration to Alicante, Spain, with a focus on the Norwegian community in Alfaz del Pi and the Swedish community in Torrevieja. Semi-structured interviews were made with 34 people—14 Scandinavian retirees and 20 key local individuals. The retirees were six women and eight men, aged between 66 and 81, living permanently or on a seasonal basis in Alicante. Key individuals included Spanish officials, representatives of Scandinavian organizations and institutions, and various businesspeople and professionals (both Spanish and Scandinavian) providing services to Scandinavian retirees. They thus represent actors who play important roles in the inclusion of retired migrants.

The interviews focused on language use, language-related problems and different aspects of inclusion. Key individuals also provided useful contextual information about Scandinavian retirement migration to Alicante and the local linguistic landscape. The duration of the interviews varied from half an hour to almost two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The interviews provided both factual information (e.g., about language use and local institutions) as well as insights into more subjective aspects (e.g., respondents’ understandings of inclusion and how it was related to linguistic matters). All transcripts were coded thematically. The main coding themes were linguistic abilities, problems and strategies, and retirees’ inclusion in Spain. Each main theme had a number of subthemes, partly derived from previous research and the theoretical framework summarized above, partly emerging inductively from the analysis of the interviews. The initial coding provided a basis for further analytical work, including interpretation and evaluation of the interviews in relation to different conceptions of inclusion.

6. Scandinavian Retirees in Alicante

The Spanish coastal areas are the most important European destinations for international retirement migration

(Membrado, 2015). In the wake of charter tourism, foreign retirees began moving to Spain already in the 1960s. British retirees are the most important group, but other North Europeans, including Scandinavians, have also arrived in their thousands. The warm climate and its association with good health and an attractive lifestyle stand out as the main reasons for moving, but lower living costs and taxes have also played a role (Gustafson, 2008; Laksfoss Cardozo, 2017).

Alicante is the Spanish province with the highest proportion of foreign residents, and the relative share of foreigners is particularly large among retirees (Huete, Mantecón, & Estévez, 2013). Official Spanish statistics report 7,306 Norwegian and 3,266 Swedish residents, most of them aged 60 or over (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, n.d.). Due to under-registration, real numbers are clearly much higher. Retirement migration to Alicante is closely associated with tourism and concentrated to the coasts. A number of municipalities have large proportions of foreign residents, often living in separate residential areas (Membrado, 2015). There is a sizable Norwegian population in and around Alfaz del Pi and a Swedish community mainly based in Torrevieja. A study by Casado-Díaz (2006) indicates that Scandinavian retirees in Alicante are mostly married or cohabiting couples, often with a background as managers, executives or as self-employed people. The vast majority of Scandinavian respondents in that study were seasonal migrants, who spent several months each year in their home countries.

7. Navigating the Linguistic Landscape

Foreign retirees who settle along the Spanish coasts encounter a diverse linguistic landscape. Spain is a multilingual country where several regional languages, in addition to Spanish, have official status. The province of Alicante is part of the Valencia region, which has two official languages—Spanish (*castellano*) and Valencian (*valencià*). Bilingualism exists among locals and in certain official settings. Yet Spanish has become increasingly dominant in the tourist areas, and most locals use Spanish in encounters with foreigners. Moreover, due to large-scale tourism and foreign settlement, the coastal areas of Alicante have been multilingual environments for decades, with English and certain other foreign languages being an integral part of the linguistic landscape (Mantecón & Huete, 2007; Membrado, 2012).

Our interviews showed that local authorities and businesses often provided information and services in English and sometimes also in other important tourist/immigrant languages. Several municipalities had foreign residents’ offices, sometimes in conjunction with the local tourist office, with bi- or multilingual staff.

There were vibrant Scandinavian environments in the area, including both Norwegian and Swedish consulates, churches, schools, clubs and social networks, and numerous Scandinavian businesses. They provided settings where the Scandinavian languages were used:

The problem in this area is that you don't really need to learn Spanish here....Because here you have a Norwegian doctor, dentist, plumber and everything you want in Norwegian. It may have been different in the beginning when the first Norwegians arrived. Perhaps you needed to know more Spanish in those days....Now there are Norwegians who offer anything that you may need. (Leader of a Norwegian organization)

Many retired migrants initially tried to learn Spanish. Yet, as several interviewees pointed out, these attempts were often not very successful and many Scandinavian retirees in the area had limited ability to communicate in Spanish. There were several reasons for this. Several retirees claimed they were 'too old to learn'. Many were seasonal migrants, who might take a Spanish course during the winter, spend the summer in Scandinavia without practicing Spanish, and then have to start all over again when they returned to Spain next autumn. Moreover, retirees spent most of their time in the Scandinavian communities, rarely met Spanish people, and therefore had few opportunities to practice their Spanish. In their occasional encounters with Spanish shopkeepers or service staff, they found that native Spanish-speakers talked very fast, possibly with an unfamiliar accent or in a regional language, and sometimes they switched to English when the retirees did not understand what was said.

As a consequence, Scandinavian retirees in Alicante often used their native language. They socialized with retired compatriots and often went to shops and service providers where Norwegian or Swedish was spoken. They could also use their native language when translation or interpretation was available. This might be public service interpreting provided by local authorities and institutions, professional language services paid for by the retirees, or language help from friends, neighbours or volunteers.

Another common alternative to native language communication was to use English. Many Scandinavian retirees today have a good knowledge of English, and English was often used by local authorities and service providers. Moreover, translation and interpretation were more often available in English than in a Scandinavian language.

Hence, retirees could often live a good life in their new home places without learning much Spanish. Serious linguistic problems were restricted to specific situations—mainly related to health problems, legal issues and emergencies—whereas retirees managed most of their day-to-day communication by using their native language, English, and/or not-so-good Spanish.

8. Dimensions of Inclusion

The linguistic landscape described above clearly had implications for Scandinavian retirees' inclusion in Spain. Further analysis of the interviews shows that retirees, as well as key local individuals, were often quite ambiva-

lent regarding inclusion and what one could expect from retirees—as well as from local Spanish authorities—in terms of linguistic adaptation. In this section, we first suggest that our initial theoretical distinction between different understandings of inclusion—assimilation, multiculturalism and civic integration—is useful for understanding this ambivalence. We then consider inclusion into Spanish society versus inclusion into Scandinavian communities in Spain, and possible implications for social cohesion.

8.1. Inclusion as Assimilation

An assimilation-oriented norm of integration was present in several interviews. This norm implied that immigrants should strive to become part of their new home country and that this required social and cultural adaptation. From this perspective, learning the host country language was crucial for inclusion and several Scandinavian respondents—retirees as well as key individuals—described it as a kind of moral obligation to learn Spanish. Those with insufficient knowledge of Spanish might express embarrassment or even shame, and several interviewees made comparisons with attitudes towards immigrants in the Scandinavian countries. Here are two retired Swedish spouses, none of whom had learned Spanish:

Woman: ...now that we are in Spain we ought to speak Spanish.

Man: We complain about our immigrants [in Sweden] when they don't speak Swedish, and...

Woman: ...and what do we do?

Man: What do we do? No, that's no good. Let's continue with the rest of the questions, shall we? [laughs]

This norm was also present—sometimes even more strongly—among migrants who spoke Spanish well, and who criticized those who did not. There were Scandinavian retirees in the area who were fluent Spanish-speakers and had made great efforts to learn. Describing oneself as 'integrated' may be a form of positive self-identification and social distinction in international retirement migration settings (Lawson, 2017), and speaking the local language is an important aspect of this. Several key individuals (both Spanish and Scandinavian) also complained about foreign retirees' isolation and unwillingness to learn Spanish, and a few Spanish interviewees argued that Spanish authorities should demand more linguistic efforts from immigrants.

8.2. Inclusion as Multiculturalism

In contrast to the understanding of inclusion as assimilation, there were expressions of a more multicultural ap-

proach to inclusion in some interviews. These highlighted the benefits of cultural diversity and cross-cultural encounters. Local officials described places like Alfaz del Pi and Torrevieja as vivid and welcoming multicultural environments that were enriched by immigrants from different countries:

The intention is that when someone comes to Torrevieja they should never feel like a stranger, like a foreign person, and we try to make it easy, by any ways and means; well, we try our utmost to assist them and make them feel integrated and welcome....Everyone who lives here together with others will become enriched!...Everyone learns a lot more than what would have been possible if you lived in a little town somewhere else. (Local official, Torrevieja)

The municipalities in the area took various multicultural initiatives. One local councillor mentioned the Europe day, the Day of the Associations, the Volunteers' Day, the Friendship Day and the 'Have-breakfast-with-us' events, all intending to highlight cultural diversity and promote inter-cultural encounters. Scandinavian clubs and institutions, too, made certain efforts to encourage meetings and contact. However, even those who praised the benefits of cross-cultural encounters regarded them as optional for individual retirees. In spite of these multicultural initiatives, Scandinavian as well as Spanish retirees mostly socialized within their own national and linguistic groups.

A multicultural understanding suggests that inclusion is not only the responsibility of the immigrants. Host society authorities should also make efforts to facilitate inclusion, possibly by granting immigrants the right to use their native language in certain situations (Castles & Miller, 1998). Interpretation was available in some public institutions, and there were also municipal contact or information departments, with at least English-speaking staff, intended to help foreign residents. Yet, apart from legal interpreting, most of these initiatives seemed to reflect everyday practical concerns rather than any consistent principles about migrants' language rights.

8.3. Inclusion as Civic Integration

When assimilationist and multicultural understandings of inclusion appeared in the interviews, they were often associated with some degree of ambivalence—most interviewees did not fully subscribe to any of these views. Instead, the predominant attitude was more pragmatic. Several interviewees pointed out that it was difficult for foreign retirees to learn a new language and become socially integrated in Spain, because of their age and because they were not working. In addition, a common attitude among retirees, and also among several key individuals, was that retirement in Spain represented pleasure and well-deserved relaxation after a long working life and that there was no urgent need to learn Spanish:

If I should somehow defend them, I feel that these older citizens, retirees, when they come here they've been working their whole life. They have their pensions and now they've found their little paradise in the sun. They want to play their golf or petanca or whatever they want to do. They don't really need to fill their heads with letters and verbs and stuff. They manage; they get along well without it. (A Scandinavian consul's secretary)

Moreover, many interviewees tended to regard foreign retirees in Spain as temporary visitors rather than immigrants. Retirees talked about themselves as Scandinavians living in Spain or 'guests in a foreign country'; local Spanish officials talked about 'residential tourism', 'international residents', or simply 'foreigners'. In addition, several interviewees emphasized that retirement migration, together with tourism, was economically beneficial to Spain. These accounts singled out Northern European retirees as a particular and desirable category, different from (other) immigrants. The implicit understanding was that for this category, the normal standards for integration did not apply. Both Scandinavian and Spanish interviewees in the study gave voice to this view, which served to defend and legitimize the retirees' insufficient linguistic abilities and their lack of integration into Spanish society.

In terms of inclusion, both Spanish and Scandinavian interviewees who made this type of argument stressed the importance of formal and legal matters. Retirees, they said, should follow Spanish laws and regulations, and make sure that they register as being resident in Spain. Spanish local governments receive State funding based on the number of residents registered in the municipality, so from their point of view, formal registration can indeed be regarded as an important form of 'inclusion'. Another common theme among Scandinavian interviewees was that they should be grateful for the hospitality they enjoyed in Spain. However, with respect to cultural, social and linguistic integration, these accounts implied a rather relaxed (or resigned) view, regarding it as a matter of personal choice rather than as a moral or societal norm.

Importantly, these arguments did not involve any strong linguistic demands on the host society. The general attitude was that one could not expect Spanish authorities to provide translation or interpretation services in the Scandinavian languages, but that it was primarily up to the retirees and their organizations to manage linguistic problems—if necessary by paying for professional language services. Taken together, these more pragmatic arguments come close to an understanding of inclusion as civic integration.

8.4. Scandinavian Communities in Spain

The analyses above mainly refer to inclusion into the host society. Yet very few retirees who migrated in their

old age could be described as having become included in Spanish society. Instead, most retirees experienced a high degree of inclusion in Scandinavian communities in Spain. They generally identified themselves as Norwegian or Swedish rather than as Spanish, and lived most of their lives within communities based on common national origin and language:

We thought in the beginning that we'd find ourselves a place where there weren't any Norwegians. But it's a long time since we gave that up. We've realized that this sense of security, being among people from our own country, we like that. (Norwegian retiree)

Scandinavian clubs, churches and businesses were key actors within these communities and had an ambiguous position in terms of inclusion. From a multicultural perspective, they were parts of a vibrant local multicultural milieu and could facilitate inclusion by providing settings where Scandinavian retirees could feel at home. From a civic integrationist perspective, they could also facilitate inclusion, by providing retirees with information and assistance to help them exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations in Spain. But from an assimilationist perspective, they obstructed inclusion by providing settings where retirees were more or less isolated from Spanish society and felt no need to learn Spanish:

There are lots and lots of Norwegians down here, who have lived here for many years but are still hardly able to order a glass of beer. Well, they manage the beer, but that's about it. And the reason is that the whole environment down here is so well organized, not least thanks to the Norwegian Club at Costa Blanca. They're fantastic, really. They've done a terrific job over the years. So people don't need [to learn Spanish]. (Interpreter at an international hospital)

Those Scandinavian retirees who learned Spanish obviously had better chances to become (and feel) included in Spanish society. Yet many of those who mainly used their native language felt included too but in the local Norwegian or Swedish communities. A relevant question here is what implications this particular combination of mobility and inclusion has for social cohesion in the broader Spanish society. Does the presence of large numbers of foreign retirees—living socially, culturally and often even geographically apart from the native population—undermine community and social cohesion? Does it create discomfort, tension, or even hostility in the native population? Fully answering these questions would require survey research in the Spanish coastal areas, which was beyond the scope of the present study. However, our interviews together with our review of previous research suggest that problems of this kind do exist but are relatively limited. Some Spanish interviewees expressed frustration about insufficient integration among foreign residents and about linguistic envi-

ronments where they could not make themselves understood in Spanish:

We sat down to have a cup of coffee and the waiter did not speak Spanish. Boy, if I am in my own country and I ask for a coffee and the waiter does not understand me, we have a problem. Then we are off track. (Advisor at the provincial office for foreign citizens)

Yet there were no accounts of xenophobia, hostility or overt criticism towards foreign retirees (cf., González Enríquez, 2016). On the contrary, it was a common understanding that foreign residents—together with tourists—were beneficial to the local economy. The tourist context is probably important here, not only because of its economic impact. Due to this context, the native population tends to regard foreign retirees as temporary visitors and not really expect them to assimilate or to participate in Spanish societal matters. Such attitudes may to some extent preclude retirees' inclusion but, paradoxically, they probably also reduce the risk that their low degree of inclusion will have a significant negative impact on social cohesion.

9. Conclusions

International retirement migration has become an important form of human mobility and numerous retirees today experience an improved quality of life due to their migration. The literature on retirement migration clearly shows that language is an important issue in such migration, yet it has rarely been the main topic in studies of international retirement migration.

An initial contribution of the present study was, therefore, to put an explicit focus on the linguistic side of retirement migration. In a case study of Scandinavian retirees in the Alicante province in Spain, we examined the linguistic landscape they met, their language use, and how this affected their inclusion within their new home country. Many retired migrants initially tried to learn the local language, but these attempts were often not very successful. As a result, they also employed a range of other linguistic strategies for their everyday communication. These strategies involved using either their native language or English, sometimes in direct interaction, sometimes through interpretation or translation.

A second contribution of the study was to highlight the factors which make retirement migration different from other forms of international mobility. These factors limit both the incentives and the opportunities for retired migrants to learn the host country language and to integrate into their new home countries.

To begin with, retired migrants are relatively old, they are mainly living on pensions, and their 'lifestyle' motives for migration often imply a desire for a calm and comfortable life. Many maintain strong social and family ties in their former home countries and return for visits or temporary stays, and they mainly identify with their countries of origin (Gustafson, 2008; King et al., 2000).

Important destinations for international retirement migration, such as Alicante, have long-established expatriate communities based on origin and language, where retired migrants can socialize with compatriots, buy goods from their home countries and obtain help and services from those who speak their own language (Laksfoss Cardozo, 2017). Due to residential developments in several destinations, many retirees also live in neighbourhoods with few native residents (Membrado, 2015).

Retirement migration has often developed in tandem with large-scale tourism. Local authorities and businesses generally regard tourism as economically beneficial and try to promote the tourism industry. This may involve providing information and services in tourists' native languages or in English (Torkington, 2015). Hence, foreign retirees benefit from linguistic settings adapted to visitors who do not speak the local language, and retired migrants are sometimes regarded as temporary visitors ('residential tourists') rather than permanent residents (Mantecón & Huete, 2007). Host societies therefore tend to have rather low expectations and few formal demands regarding social, cultural and linguistic integration, as long as migrants fulfil basic legal obligations, such as registering as being resident.

Another important aspect is the role of English. The English language today has an unrivalled position as international lingua franca (Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer, 2013). It is often, materially and symbolically, associated with globalization, mobility, opportunity and privilege (Torkington, 2015). This, together with the presence of large numbers of British tourists and migrants in many European retirement destinations, has made English a kind of 'second language' in places like Alicante. Local residents get better job opportunities if they learn English and those retired migrants who are not native English-speakers still often have better knowledge of English than of the local language.

A third contribution of the study was to analyse language use in retirement migration in the light of three different notions of inclusion. The analysis suggests that the Spanish host society did not expect or demand assimilation and individual multilingualism but was mostly satisfied with civic integration, largely making use of mediated forms of communication. Certain policy initiatives might also be compatible with a multicultural approach, although most of these initiatives did not seem to rest on any explicit conception of immigrant language rights. The de facto societal multilingualism that exists in retirement destinations like Alicante rather appears as a patchwork of pragmatic practices among individuals, ethnic associations, businesses and local authorities. This analytical approach invites further research, which may include both comparative empirical studies of language use and inclusion in different migration settings and theoretical work on different notions of inclusion.

However, large-scale international retirement migration raises a more fundamental question about inclusion: Inclusion into what? Current political and scientific discus-

sions on different integration models address inclusion into the host society. In the kind of international retirement migration settings examined here, it is clear, first, that many migrants—seasonal migrants in particular—retain strong connections with, and often a sense of belonging to, their countries of origin. Second, inclusion in their new home countries often takes place within expatriate communities rather than the host society and language stands out as an important reason for this.

A final point to make is that the linguistic landscapes described here obviously work as pull factors for retirement migration. Many retirees consider it more convenient to migrate to places where they can use their native language, or English, than to settle in places where they would have to learn a new language. There are probably also selection effects involved: Those retirees who are least able or willing to learn a foreign language are most likely to choose destinations and residential areas with established expatriate communities. The alternative for those retirees may not be to settle in a different area and learn the local language but to remain in their country of origin. The linguistic landscapes that characterize places like coastal Alicante thus facilitate a type of mobility that gives many retirees an improved quality of life, by allowing them to settle in attractive retirement destinations, while at the same time providing them with a sense of inclusion.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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